Redistricting Group Minutes

March 2, 2012 - 4:00 p.m. Room 319 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Redistricting Group Members Present: Clegg (Chair), Bad Heart Bull, Brown, Cohen, Connell, Dolan, Ferrara, Garcia, Heinle, Kozak, Lazarus, Lickness, Massey, Peltola, Rubenstein, Sandberg, Schwarzkopf, Thaden

Redistricting Group Members Absent: Cole (Excused), Gerdes, Johnson (Excused), Metge (Excused), Richardson, Unni

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. Adopt Agenda

Lazarus moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded Adopted upon a voice vote. Absent - Gerdes, Johnson, Metge, Richardson, Unni.

3. Approve minutes of February 15, 2012

Lazarus moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2012. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes, Johnson, Metge, Richardson, Unni.

4. Chair's Report

All Redistricting Group members had been emailed a new meeting schedule, which supersedes all previous schedules. The new schedule was necessary to insure that the public hearing notice and the final proposed maps were published in Finance and Commerce seven days prior to the public hearing, as required by Charter.

Lazarus stated that there will be unhappy people no matter what the final map looks like and in the event of a lawsuit, there should be adequate discussion on record as to why the Redistricting Group made any changes to the maps.

5. Receive and file all public comments received since the February 15, 2012 Redistricting Group meeting and enter them into the official record

Lazarus moved to receive and file all public comments received since the February 15, 2012 Redistricting Group meeting and the February 29, 2012 Public Hearing Journal and enter them into the official record. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes, Johnson, Metge, Richardson, Unni.

6. Update by Carol Bachun, Assistant City Attorney

Carol Bachun, Assistant City Attorney, provided an update on the state redistricting process. The Minnesota Legislature did not meet the redistricting deadline of February 21, so the Special Redistricting Panel issued their map on that date at approximately 1:00 p.m. The Panel determined the boundaries for the State Senate, House, and Congressional districts. Those maps are available on the Special Redistricting Panel website at http://www.mncourts.gov/?page=4469.

Clegg noted that the Clerk's Office/Elections Department will be making recommendations regarding potential conflicts between legislative district, city ward, and precinct lines.

7. Discuss comments received at February 29 and March 1 Public Hearings

Clegg stated that Redistricting Group members should give direction to the Operations Committee on how to proceed after the input received at the first two public hearings.

Lazarus stated that he would like to see maps prepared that accommodated the requests of the East African, American Indian, and Latino communities and then see how those changes affect the population requirements in all the wards.

Peltola stated that he agreed with most of the comments at the public hearings, but he didn't like any of the maps, including the Redistricting Group's February 15 map. He had been working on his own map and had some ideas on incorporating some of the changes in a way that doesn't warp the structure of the current ward system.

Brown stated that he would like to explore the possibility of moving the eastern boundary of Ward 6 a little further to the east into Ward 2 to incorporate more of the Riverside Avenue and Franklin Avenue areas and then see how that shifts things around. He would also like to look at shifting the line between Wards 5 and 7 to Bassett Creek and putting the North Loop into a single ward, as well as tweaking the line between Wards 1 and 3 to include more of the arts district in Ward 1. He also wanted to look at the area where Wards 8, 10, and 13 intersect.

Thaden stated that, regarding the line between Wards 6 and 2, the alternative would be to move Ward 2 to the west, then move the line between Wards 2 and 12 northward or move the line between Wards 2 and 1 southward.

Ferrara stated that the group had heard that neighborhoods do not want to be divided into two wards, but redistricting can't take place without splitting some neighborhoods. While he respected that opinion, he had lived in a neighborhood that had three council members and had found it to be an advantage. There can be a benefit to having two council members working on issues within a neighborhood. He was in favor of making adjustments to the current map, but felt the core draft map was very good.

Massey felt that the group was hearing competing proposals for what it means to try to provide a fair opportunity for growing communities of color. The We All Win proposal seemed to be a response to the Citizens for Fair Redistricting proposal. It seems that the Fair Redistricting proposal was to create a real opportunity for the Somali community to feel represented. In response, does that dissipate the opportunity in other wards by other communities of color? The We All Win proposal seems to be a way to better balance that. Rather than concentrating more opportunity in one ward, it spreads that opportunity, although not in as great a percentage, across four different wards. She would like the Redistricting Group to have a deeper discussion on the pros and cons of those proposals. Also, when communities defend not dividing a neighborhood, she would like them to back up that request and explain how not dividing a neighborhood protects a real community of interest in order for the Redistricting Group to better evaluate the request.

Lickness stated that she had studied the We All Win proposal and thought it addressed a lot of the issues that had been discussed regarding the Somali and Latino communities, issues regarding Ward 5, as well the Whittier neighborhood and how Ward 6 is configured. It also respected the neighborhood boundaries of the four neighborhoods in the Phillips area. She felt that the Redistricting Group should consider many of the elements from the We All Win proposal.

Rubenstein stated that the repeated concerns that were raised in the public hearings that she felt could be easily addressed included keeping all of the Harrison Neighborhood in Ward 5, keeping the Chicago Avenue area in one ward, and not dividing the East Harriet area into three wards. The deeper issues included Ward 8 moving to the west and the issue of majority minority wards versus opportunity wards.

Garcia felt that the Redistricting Group members all have the best of intentions in terms of balancing the minority opportunity concept with the minority coalition concept and attempting to increase the chances of people from different minority groups being elected. However, as the We All Win group pointed out, in doing so you may put different groups together who may clash with each other and end up electing a non-minority person anyway. There is also the reality of political dynamics. The We All Win map tries to optimize the number of potential minority groups to be elected, but also decreases the propensity that they are pitted against each other within the ward. Also, the population in the Central Neighborhood increased by only 157, but the population of Latinos and Blacks are 80% of that neighborhood, which points to moving Ward 8 more to the northeast if possible. Discussion at public hearings regarding the topic of eligible

voters 18 and over was irrelevant. She appreciated the fact that the group looked at immigrants as all immigrants, whether political or economic refugees.

Bad Heart Bull stated that he felt like the future belongs to those who show up, which is why he wanted to be part of this process. He appreciated the people from the Latino, Black, and East African communities attending the meetings and voicing their concerns. The Redistricting Group is not going to please everyone. Instead of moving the American Indian community into one ward and isolating their voice to just one council member, why not have two or three council members represent the community? The Redistricting Group is trying to be fair and represent everyone's interest. He liked the sample map but wanted to make sure that the community's input was taken very seriously.

Sandberg stated that ten years ago neighborhoods might have agreed to being split and having multiple voices, but things have changed. Funding is down for administrative purposes. Some of them do not have the resources to deal with multiple council members, and that might be part of what the group is hearing. Some of the proposed maps had some good elements deserving of further discussion.

Kozak stated that while everyone probably agreed with the sentiments expressed in the public testimony, the problem was translating that into a map, which will require the group to make choices they may not be overjoyed about, but they are decisions that have to be made and there is a clock running. This is the third time he has participated in the redistricting process, and this was the most open process yet. The main issues are race and ethnicity and whether or not to split a neighborhood. In terms of trying to balance the racial composition of the wards, the good faith of the Redistricting Group is beyond reproach. The principle obligations of the Redistricting Group are to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Voting Rights Act, the principle of one person, one vote, as well as Charter requirements and the group's own guidelines.

Schwarzkopf stated that the neighborhoods have been in operation for about 40 years. Generally speaking the boundaries are static, but the people aren't. They move in and out of those boundaries all the time and there are changes within each neighborhood.

Connell stated that, as a resident of Ward 5 and the Willard Hay Neighborhood, about 150 yards from the northern edge of the Harrison Neighborhood, he wanted to speak about the Ward 5 lines and what they may look like on the next map. Several weeks ago, he had spoken passionately about including a portion of the North Loop in Ward 5. Harrison residents are not satisfied with the line splitting their neighborhood down Glenwood Avenue, and they want the line moved back where it was. In order to do that, given the dynamics occurring on the northern side of the fifth ward because of the inclusion of Hawthorne, it will be very difficult to draw the line on the southeast corner of the fifth ward anywhere but to the west of the North Loop, effectively removing it from the fifth ward. Based on the public comment, he was prepared to support a map with those lines. However, the map advocated by the fifth ward residents concentrates the highest concentration of the poverty in the city in the fifth ward for the next ten years.

We hear all the time that the city has concentrated the poverty in the fifth ward. Fifth ward residents are doing this to themselves.

Ferrara stated that the Redistricting Group has to do what they think is right. Even though he would like Harrison not to be split, he had not changed his position, and he planned to advocate that Harrison be split.

Kozak stated that one ward should not have the burden of all the poverty. It is not only difficult for residents, it is difficult for that council member. It is a burden that two council members need to share.

Clegg stated that there seemed to be consensus that the Operations Committee should address some of the neighborhood issues and some of the concerns from communities of interest, primarily in the areas around the borders of Wards 6, 2, and 9. He distributed a map he had created on the Common Cause website incorporating changes to Ward 6 which also impacted Wards 2, 8, 9, 10, and 12. His map demonstrated that when the Operations Committee tries to accommodate some of the changes requested, it will cause impacts to other wards.

Garcia stated that she would like to see the Ward 8 line moved further east on Clegg's map. Her concern was not related to Chicago Avenue, but to the Central Neighborhood. The Central Neighborhood has about 8,000 people, 3,000 of which are Latino, and the Latino population increases moving east.

Kozak stated that the current ward map has five wards with White people in the minority. On the map distributed by Clegg, that number goes down to three. By trying to accommodate all the requests, the group will see impacts they didn't anticipate.

Schwarzkopf stated that the more you pack, which is what people want to do, the more you dilute the population throughout the city.

Peltola also distributed a map he had a created on the Common Cause website which put all of Cedar Riverside north of Franklin Avenue, the University of Minnesota, and the Como Neighborhood in Ward 2, squared up Ward 12, put East Harriet in Ward 10, and Elliot Park in Ward 6, while trying to keep as many neighborhoods intact as possible. He found that the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting and We All Win maps had created big changes elsewhere in the city.

Public Commentary

a) Abdul Warsame, 614 19th Avenue South, stated that the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting welcomed the changes on the new maps just distributed and thought they both addressed some of their issues. The Citizens Committee is having discussions with the Latino community and trying to iron out their differences. He did not consider creating a ward with a 40% minority population to be packing; packing would be around 90%.

- **b)** Joseph Spangler, 2920 15th Avenue South, stated that the only thing he cared about was retaining his franchise of one person, one vote. He believed it was unfair to be put into a ward that purposely diminished his franchise in order to give an opportunity to someone of another interest to be elected.
- c) Karen Rosar, Vice President of the North Loop Neighborhood Association, stated that until recently the North Loop Neighborhood was not recognized as a thriving residential area; it was considered an obsolete industrial district. They have worked hard to convert it into a thriving, mixed-use urban core neighborhood. The area includes many homeless shelters. They are currently split between two wards and have managed that fairly well despite the fact that they feel they may have been better served with one ward. The new map splits them into three wards. They are a non-staffed neighborhood organization and don't have the resources to respond to two wards and two council members. Their residents get confused regarding which ward they are in and sometimes don't bother to vote. She strongly urged the Redistricting Group to try to keep the North Loop Neighborhood whole. (Ms. Rosar submitted her own written comments as well as written comments from the North Loop Neighborhood Association for the record.)
- d) Alex Minn, 701 Main Street Southeast, stated that the idea of segregating communities along lines of ethnicity, social, or economic demographics so they can have one vote on the City Council does not work. They did this to the African American community in Chicago. All the projects there are being torn down now. It didn't work. If the Hispanics and the East Africans both have a candidate in an election, it doesn't matter because whoever gets the DFL nod wins anyway.
- e) Mariano Espinoza, 3120 12th Avenue South, distributed the We All Win map and stated that one of the principle questions is what kind of community do we want to build together? He disagreed with the other proposal because in the We All Win proposal, no one loses. The We All Win proposal creates balance. Wards 9 and 6 would become minority opportunity wards. The proposal maintains the neighborhoods together. Phillips Neighborhood has the highest percentage of Latino ownership in the state of Minnesota. They do not want to create their own power, they want to create an opportunity to work with their brothers and sisters to create a better city. In the next ten years in Minneapolis, 300,000 baby boomers will retire. In the next decade, Latinos will be the largest minority in Minneapolis.
- f) Vic Thorstenson, 522 3rd Avenue South, Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting, distributed a map (which was also in members' packets) that he had tweaked to include some of the suggestions he heard at the public hearing. His new map included only twelve neighborhood splits. Downtown would be split between Wards 8, 6, and 3, with 3 having the largest share.
- g) Mike Dean, business address 2323 East Franklin, Executive Director, Common Cause Minnesota, stated that all of the maps the Redistricting Group had seen were available on-line at <u>drawminneapolis.org</u>. He encouraged people to evaluate the maps

on-line and view the number of community splits, minority opportunity wards, majority minority wards, compactness, etc. The term "communities of interest" has been adopted by the court and the court has insisted that Minnesota state maps use communities of interest. Unfortunately during the early part of the process, the Redistricting Group didn't go out and seek that data like the court did and because of that the Redistricting Group is somewhat disadvantaged. Communities of interest can be ethnic, cultural, or even a transportation hub. It is not just drawing maps around ethnic communities, it is about representation, ensuring that an elected official can easily represent a community. Creating a melting pot too often allows for a majority community to override the interest of a minority community.

- h) John Flory, Latino Economic Development Center, stated that he has worked on Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street. He has learned that immigrant communities are an incredible resource to the community and one that we have not appreciated as much as we should. The Nicollet Avenue and Lake Street areas have been revived by the immigrant communities. Civic participation has not followed as quickly as commercial development. He was in favor of maximizing immigrant and minority representation in the city. It will benefit the city greatly and help the city make significant advances both in economic and social steps. The future of minority civic representation will be improved with these steps.
- i) Dan Dittman, 3729 Snelling Avenue, stated that there is an acknowledgement in the court order that Mr. Dean referenced that the justices do not have the authority to make political decisions with regard to the district lines and end up defaulting to a least-change model. The Redistricting Group does have that authority. If a least-change model is desirable, they can do that. But if more radical changes are needed, they also have that authority, unlike the courts.
- **j) Scarlett Lopez, Phillips Neighborhood**, noted that no one on the Redistricting Group lived in the Phillips Neighborhood. The Redistricting Group is playing around with her future and her community's future without having any idea of what they have been through. She felt that she and her people were not being heard. The Latino, Hmong, and the African Americans were not being heard. It is important for the Redistricting Group to consider the We All Win proposal.
- **k)** Hussein Ahmed, 1501 6th Street, stated that the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting liked the map distributed by Chair Clegg, but they would like it tweaked in order to keep Council Member Lilligren in Ward 6.
- I) Marlena Rojas, 2425 Elliot Avenue, stated that the We All Win map will create more communities of color. They need to have their own representatives. If they are all packed together, they will be fighting each other. They want to create opportunities for all communities, the Latino, Native American, Somali, African, and Asian communities.
- m) Jose Luis Villasenor, 2708 18th Avenue, stated that his children were born at his home in the Phillips community. He believed that people need to be in a community

that is representative of them. The Somali, African, and Native American communities also need to have a voice. He supported the We All Win proposal. There was going to be a meeting between the different communities on Saturday to discuss their differences regarding redistricting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Peggy Menshek Redistricting Group Coordinator